

Sat. Nov. 3 P.I.  
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# A Hazardous Dump Is 'Lost' In S. Seattle

By Gil Bailey

A "lost" hazardous chemical waste dump, holding 200 tons of chemicals, exists somewhere in the industrial area of South Seattle, a U.S. House investigative subcommittee said yesterday.

The Seattle dump was one of 3,383 waste disposal sites listed by the House Commerce investigative subcommittee, but it was one of the few named without a specific location.

"It is the most potentially dangerous such site in King County," said Duff Wilson, an aide to Rep. Mike Lowry, D - Seattle. Wilson, on Lowry's instructions, had begun an investigation into the dump site.

The subcommittee said "the hazardous waste disposal problem may well be the single most significant environmental health issue of the decade." Its report was sparked by the environmental disaster from leaking chemicals in Love Canal in New York State.

The 53 largest chemical companies were asked by the subcommittee to report on such dump sites which contain a total of 762 million tons of chemical wastes. Of the more than 3,000 sites, 1,099 have been abandoned.

"Many of these closed sites contain wastes with chemical components known to pose potentially serious hazards to the public health and environment," the subcommittee concluded, adding some of the abandoned sites are "imminent hazard."

Some of the unused sites have been covered over with tennis courts, parking lots, farm and pasture land and private residences, a cemetery, a raceway and botanical gardens, the subcommittee report said.

However, Rep. Bob Eckhardt, D - Texas, the subcommittee chairman, pointed out that many of the dump sites may not be dangerous. He noted the Environmental Protection Agency and local governments are responsible for determining the risks at each site.

Seattle has no record of its chemical waste dump.

"We don't know a darn thing," said acting Seattle Fire Marshal Bobby Lee Hansen. "We have no listing and the oldtimers don't recall it. We are still checking."

The House subcommittee did provide some clues.

The dump is listed in zip code area 98108, which includes the industrial area around Boeing to Jefferson Park.

The dump was operated from 1952 to 1962. Chemical wastes, including acids, heavy metals, trace metals and inorganics, were covered by landfill, according to the subcommittee report.

"This site is potentially dangerous because the chemicals may be toxic and because it was operated at a time when there were few controls," said Wilson of Lowry's staff, after talking to subcommittee investigators.

Susan Leal of the subcommittee staff said, "Maybe, the chemical company didn't know where the stuff was taken or maybe the records have been lost. The name of the company is in the computer and we can't get it out."

The computerized information will be turned over to the Environmental Protection Agency.

EPA Director Douglas Costle told the subcommittee he is ordering an immediate investigation to determine which sites nationwide might pose hazards.

"Where sites are discovered that pose hazardous waste problems, EPA will utilize all its available resources and legal authorities to undertake enforcement actions and, where authority allows, to require cleanup," he added.

The Seattle Fire Department, too, will pursue the location of the site here, according to Hansen.

"If anybody has any information, please let us know," he said.

The Seattle site is only one among 47 sites in the state of Washington, according to the subcommittee report. Tacoma with 17 such sites has the heaviest concentration of chemical dumps.

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